

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

Explore colors, counting with these books

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Spring brings a burst of color and new growth. The following books will help with exploring color, counting and other concepts.

"Groucho's Eyebrows," by Tricia Brown, illustrated by Barbara Lavallee, 2003, Alaska Northwest Books. Lavallee's trademark illustrations bring this cute story to life.

Groucho, a real cat with dark eyebrows and his owner go on some adventures in the Alaskan wilderness that capture the hearts of readers.

"C is for Construction: Big Trucks" and "Diggers from A to Z," 2003, Chronicle Books. This appealing book features action construction and equipment photographs of all the cool building equipment.

"Spring is Here: A Barnyard Counting Book," by Pamela Jane, illustrated by Melissa Sweet, 2004, Little Simon. A lively pop-up and counting book for lap sitters and toddlers.

"Quiet Loud," by Leslie Patricelli, 2003, Candlewick Press. This series of concept board books has charming illustrations and the topics are perfect for teaching little ones new vocabulary. Additional titles include: "Yummy Yucky" and "Big Little."

Dr. Stan Steiner teaches Children's Literature at Boise State University. You may find more book reviews at <http://education.boisestate.edu/ssteine>.



Remember to say thanks May 7th

Dear Reader:

This month's newsletter features an article about Provider's Appreciation Day set for May 7th.

It's a day when parents are invited to take a moment and thank those folks who care for and educate our nation's children, especially during the preschool years.

A child's experiences in the early years are critical to his or her success in school and later in life.

Parents count on providers every day to ensure their children are safe, well fed, engaged, educated, and entertained.

Providers become intimately involved in a child's life from helping them learn to use the toilet and to eat to teaching them how to count and recognize the ABCs.

We don't often talk about the other service day care operators and preschool teachers provide. A work-



Dr. Marilyn Howard
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ing parent described it to me as peace of mind. The knowledge that a child is being well-cared for allows parents to focus on their work without being con-

sumed by worry.

Although providers do an essential job for the most part as a nation we do not financially or in other ways recognize the value of this work.

Across the United States about 2.8 million individuals earn money working with young children.

Most of the men and women I've met working in this field choose it because they love working with children.

Chances are if you have a copy of this newsletter you are the parent of a preschool child. If you are, I encourage you to take time May 7 (or any day) and say thank you to the other important adults in your child's life.

If you are a day care provider or early childhood educator: thank you for your service and dedication to the young people in our communities.

READY TO LEARN

Foolish April good time to show reading's fun

From www.readingrockets.org

"Foolish" April is a great time to read, eat, and do goofy things.

In the books recommended below, kids will read about a ballerina cow, rowdy roosters, and much more.

The books also detail odd concoctions to make with kids such as green gooey goop and edible art. The lesson children learn is that goofing around with books can be fun.

"Clorinda," by Robert Kinerk.

This delightful, sometimes laugh-out-loud funny story of Clorinda, a cow who discovers ballet, is told through jaunty illustrations



and rhythmic, rhyming text.

"Cooking Art: Easy Edible Art for Young Children," by Mary Ann Kohl and Jean Potter.

Art is meant to be enjoyed, and sometimes even eaten! Create, and then consume, the attractive, tasty, and nutritious treats featured in this fun recipe book.

"The Great Thumbprint Drawing Book," by Ed Emberley. This easy-to-follow book helps even the youngest make fascinating, funny creatures. One example is to make a

thumbprint, add a few lines, and create an instant cartoon.

"Poultrygeist," by Mary Jane Auch.

When rude roosters continue to disturb the other farm animals, only Clarissa the cow and Sophie the pig take action to stop the raucous fowl. Their tale creates lots of laughs for readers.

"The Wingdingdilly," by Bill Peet.

Ole Scamp learns to like himself better once he's changed by a peculiar witch.

This wacky story uses comic illustrations to convey a positive message in a lighthearted way.



RESOURCES

Recognize child care providers, educators May 7

May 7 is National Provider Appreciation Day, a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers and educators of young children everywhere.

Provider Appreciation Day is held so everyone can appreciate the number and importance of child care workers.

The early childhood profession not only plays a critical role in supporting healthy families and children but is also a key part of our entire national economy.

Started in 1996 by a group of volunteers in New Jersey, Provider Appreciation Day is appropriately celebrated each year on the Friday before Mother's Day.

The founding organizers saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents.

Recognition takes many forms including state and municipal government proclamations, local media coverage, business and community events, and private acknowledgement from parents.

- Get together with other parents to create a surprise
- Send flowers, cards or a handwritten note of appreciation
- Bring breakfast or lunch for your provider and for the kids
- Work with your child to create a special remembrance
- Buy something for your provider's play area
- Give your provider a paid day off, or a raise, or a bonus
- Key in on your provider's hobby and buy her an appropriate gift
- Check to see if your employer provides scholarships for toys, equipment or training that you can sponsor as a parent.

NUTRITION

Programs provide meals during summer

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is good, nutritious food that's "in" when school is "out."

The program operates when school is out for long periods of time, such as during the summer months.

More than 170 SFSP meal service sites operate in Idaho where children age 1 to 18 years may go in the summer to get nutritious meals.

Meal service sites are lo-



cated in a variety of settings, including schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, faith-based organizations, community centers, day camps, residential summer camps, housing projects, and migrant centers, or on Indian reservations.

In 2003, Idaho's SFSP sponsors served approximately 760,000 meals to children in Idaho. Schools, units of government, universities and community and faith-based organizations sponsor SFSP in Idaho.

Summer food programs provide a variety of benefits.

Children have access to nutritious meals, parents stretch food dollars, food service workers have summer employment, organizations receive funds to provide meals to children, and communities provide safe places for children to go to be with other children and supportive adults.

Individuals looking for a SFSP site in their community or neighborhood or who would like to find out if an organization can sponsor a SFSP in your area, please call Sally Bartlett at 208-332-6935 or email her at sbarlett@sde.state.id.us.

READY TO LEARN

Easter egg activity helps build math skills

This "Easter Egg Math" from www.lessonplanspage.com can help older preschoolers practice their math skills in a fun interactive way.

Objective: Review addition, subtraction, and learn problem-solving skills.

Materials: An Easter Basket, Easter grass and several plastic eggs.

Activity: Place two to ten eggs in the basket. Have a child count the eggs that are in the basket. Then ask two children to hide the eggs in a designated area.

Select one to two children to look for the eggs. Stop him or her occasionally and ask him or her how many eggs has he or she found so far. Ask "How many more do you need to look for?"

The children can help solve this problem and may write the equation on the chalkboard to resolve the problem. Don't forget to ask those answering first, to tell us how he or she knew.

After all the eggs have been found you may repeat the activity using other children.

INFORMATION

Tips for checking playground safety

April 26-30 is National Playground Safety Week. Each year, more than 200,000 children are injured on America's playgrounds. The National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) provides checklists and other information on its website <http://www.uni.edu/playground/resources/list.html>.

Below is a quick checklist developed by NPPS for parents to use in evaluating a playground:

Supervision is present, but strings and ropes aren't.

Adult presence is needed to watch for potential hazards, observe, intercede and facilitate play when necessary. Strings on clothing or ropes used for play can cause accidental strangulation if caught on equipment.

All children play on age-appropriate equipment.

Preschoolers, ages 2 - 5, and children, ages

5 - 12, are developmentally different and need different equipment located in separate areas to keep the playground safe and fun for all.

Falls to surface are cushioned.

Nearly 70 percent of all playground injuries are related to falls to the surface. Acceptable surfaces include hardwood fiber/mulch, pea gravel, sand and synthetic materials such as poured-in-place rubber mats or tiles.

Playground surfaces should not be concrete, asphalt, grass, blacktop, packed dirt or rocks.

Equipment is safe.

Check to make sure the equipment is anchored safely in the ground, all equipment pieces are in good working order, S-hooks are entirely closed, bolts are not protruding, there are no exposed footings, etc..